

Karen Quinn
Member of New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT), American Federation of Teachers
(AFT) and Recovery For All CT
Resident of Cheshire

**General Comments: HB-6659 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR
THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFOR.**

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Governor's proposed budget for childcare and public education in our state.

I am Karen Quinn, and I live in Cheshire, and I am a member of the American Federation of Teachers, a union representing 30,000 educators and workers across the state. I am also a member of Recovery For All, a statewide coalition of over sixty community, faith, and labor organizations across Connecticut.

I have been teaching in New Haven for 21 years. I spent most of my time teaching 4th grade, and the past 7 years I have been a Library Media Specialist (LMS).

LMSs teach our students research skills, library skills, and navigating important learning databases, just to name a few. We teach important college-ready thinking and learning skills that students need to succeed in higher education.

Currently 3,178 students in our district have no Library Media Specialist at all, because the district is underfunded. Almost half of the students in our district have only a part-time LMS, when they deserve a full-time LMS.

Because of the teacher shortage and staffing shortage – because our schools lack funding – many LMS are working multiple jobs. We manage computers and tech for hundreds of students and staff, and we work as substitute teachers, **because nobody is hired to do those jobs.** All while we're trying to do the job we were hired to do in half the time.

Imagine if every student were exposed to quality research skills and explicitly taught critical thinking! This is what our students are missing when we do not have a full time Library Media Specialist in every school. This is one of the many consequences of an underfunded school system. Believe in our students and our teachers and fully fund New Haven Public Schools.

Our city has the potential to be exceptional. Without funding, that potential will not be realized in teachers nor students. Let's reach our full potential!

In conclusion, I ask the Appropriations Committee to fully fund and fully staff our public schools. At a minimum, fully fund the ECS formula this year. I urge you to prioritize equitable funding for districts that serve students who are low-income, English Language Learners, and students of color.

Thank you!